

RECEIVED

18 JUN 2009

London,

£597

The Secretary
Committee on Standards in Public Life
35 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BQ

Dear Sir or madam

I am writing to you, as I am aware your office, headed by Sir Christopher Kelly is conducting a review of MP's expenses. I am aware there will be many recommendations that you will wish to make and I really wanted to throw something into the melting pot, as I have heard many MPs recently stating what they should and should not be allowed to claim for.

I believe if MP's expenses are to continue there should be a flat rate for housing, i.e. £80 a night for example (which is the cost of a standard hotel within 10 miles or so of Westminster for the three-four days an MP has to be at Westminster and that an MP who lives within commutable distance should not receive any second home allowance. I would define a commutable distance as one, which an MP could be expected to get home via public transport, i.e. before the last train to their home as every other commuter in the capital has to endure.

If an MP wishes to reside in a more expensive hotel then that is a personal choice and they should have to pay on top of their £80 allowance. In addition they should not be allowed to take out a mortgage and expect taxpayers to pay for this, as it is not justifiable for the amount of time they spend in Westminster on a weekly basis. For instance how many weeks of recess do MPs have when they do not have to be at Westminster at all and how many weeks of mortgage payments are taxpayers paying for as a result?

In addition they should not be allowed to claim for food. I, and millions others around the UK work all day long and cannot claim for food so how does their job differ from the rest of the British people? I suspect it does not and therefore they should not be allowed to claim, or perhaps I should be allowed to claim for my food?

My main point though is that if someone decides MPs should be allowed to claim mortgage payments for houses they probably could do without, then they should not be allowed to claim for council tax bills. This is because every person in the UK only has to pay council tax once. If an MP can claim council tax on their expenses then the taxpayers is subsidising the payment of their council tax in their first home in their constituency and this is wrong. In addition, a proper receipt should accompany everything this wish to claim for and everything they claim for should be made available to the public.

I look forward to hearing from you on this proposal and look forward to your full report, which I hope will be written on the basis of common sense, decency and thrift.

Yours faithfully

M Benson
cc. David Cameron's Office.